

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:**

On page 5, please add the following paragraph after line 26:

--The funnel casting die plate 1 has running parallel to the pouring direction PD, cooling bore holes 14 and/or groove shaped coolant channels 6, which in thermally and mechanically stressed areas of the die plate 1, detailed below, are (i) configured narrower in diameter, i.e., have a lower effective cross sectional area, (ii) run closer to the pouring side 4, and (iii) are spaced closer to each other. It is noted that the die plate 1 may include any combination of these cooling features and may also include only a single one of these features, i.e., may only have, for example, cooling bore holes 14 that are configured narrower in the thermally and mechanically stressed areas but not running closer to the pouring side and spaced closer to each other in the thermally and mechanically stressed areas, etc.--.